DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 531 EA 013 723

AUTHOR Dawson, Judith A.
TITLE Support for Educational Change: Its Forms, Functions, and Sources.
INSTITUTION Research for Better Schools, Inc., Philadelphia, Pa.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Dec 80
NOTE 34p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association (Philadelphia, PA, March 11-14, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Basic Skills: Career Education: Case Studies: *Change Strategies: Educational Change: Elementary Secondary Education: Field Tests: *Inservice Teacher Education: *Instructional Innovation: *Linking Agents: Program Implementation: Research Utilization: Teacher Morale: *Technical Assistance

ABSTRACT

The functions of support provided to five committees of teachers engaged in planning and implementation of innovations are described as part of a longitudinal study of external assistance in school change. The five schools participated in projects developed collaboratively with Research for Better Schools. Sources of support included school and district administration offices, external assistance agencies, and state departments of education. Three elementary schools were involved in basic skills projects to help teachers use the results of educational research. Two secondary schools were developing career education programs. The support provided to participants in the projects served four basic functions: (1) process facilitation, by having training and planning occur during school hours: (2) knowledge transfer, providing teachers with much of the knowledge, skills, and other resources needed for planning: (3) barrier removal, removing or reducing obstacles to project planning and implementation: and (4) morale maintenance. (Author/MLF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED203531

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

SUPPORT FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE:

ITS FORMS, FUNCTIONS, AND SOURCES

Judith A. Dawson

Field Studies Component
Research and Evaluation Division
Research for Better Schools, Inc.
444 North Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19123

December, 1980

The preparation of this report was supported by funds from the National Institute of Education, United States Department of Education. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of NIE, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

EA 013 723

EERA Meeting, 1981

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. A. Dawson
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ABSTRACT

One of the most important roles of change agents is to provide assistance and support to people involved in planning and implementing innovations. Such support can help eliminate or reduce many of the barriers to change which have been described in the research literature. Multiple kinds, sources, and functions of support were identified through intensive field research on five innovation projects. In each, a committee which included teachers and others was engaged in innovation planning and implementation; the support provided to them will be described here.

The kinds of support included money; logistical and clerical assistance; knowledge, skills, and resource materials; exertion of authority; and gestures of assurance. The sources of support were school and district administration offices, external assistance agencies, and state departments of education. Support seemed to have four distinct functions: (1) it reduced the demands which pre-implementation training and planning placed on teachers, primarily by enabling those activities to occur during school hours, (2) support provided teachers with much of the knowledge, skills, and other resources needed for planning, (3) support removed some of the barriers which would have made implementation difficult or impossible otherwise, and (4) support helped maintain teachers' morale and motivation at levels sufficiently high for continued participation.

PREFACE

Research for Better Schools (RBS) is committed to providing a balanced program of research, development, and technical assistance to educational agencies in the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware region. A major part of the research element consists of Field Studies projects. One of those projects focuses on two of RBS' development efforts and the local schools participating in them. The development projects are creating approaches through which external agencies can help schools improve their curricula and instructional strategies in basic skills and career preparation. Schools participating in the development hope to improve their own educational programs. RBS intends to develop approaches and knowledge which will have generalizable utility.

This is one of several reports on the Field Studies' research. The five reports being developed in the 1980-81 year are intended to be of interest to researchers, school practitioners, and those charged with the operation and staffing of development and dissemination projects throughout the country. The reports cover two years of activity in five schools. Their purpose is to identify and clarify issues related to the support of local school improvement. A complete listing of all reports available from this project is found on the inside back cover of this document.

William A. Firestone
Field Studies Coordinator

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PROCEDURES	2
KINDS, SOURCES, AND FUNCTIONS OF SUPPORT	5
Process Facilitation	8
Knowledge Transfer	10
Barrier Removal	14
Morale Preservation	18
SUMMARY AND FURTHER OBSERVATIONS	23
LIST OF REFERENCES	27

SUPPORT FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE:

ITS FORMS, FUNCTIONS, AND SOURCES

One of the most important roles of change agents is to provide assistance and support to teachers and others who are engaged in innovation planning and implementation. Studies of educational change have attributed innovation failure to a number of factors whose effects might be alleviated through the provision of support to innovation participants. Those factors include: lack of a clear understanding of the innovation, the absence of skills and abilities to implement it (Gross, Giacquinta, and Bernstein, 1971), the unavailability of materials and equipment when they are needed (Charters and Pellegrin, 1973; Gross, 1979), lack of time to learn about and plan the innovation, insufficient motivation to exert the effort required (House, 1974), and policies and procedures that impede implementation. Yet, recent reviews of the change literature indicate that relatively little is known about innovation support (Fullan, 1980; Miles, 1980; Sieber, 1979). Little is known about the forms that support can take and the functions that different forms of support serve. And, it is not altogether clear what kinds of support come from change agents inside the system, such as principals and central office staff, or from external change agents.

This paper is an attempt to describe the functions of support which was provided to five committees of teachers who were engaged in innovation planning and implementation. "Support" refers here to assistance from outside the committees. The kinds and sources of support which served each function will also be described here. The kinds of support included money; logistical and clerical assistance; knowledge, skills, and

resource materials; exertion of authority; and moral assurance. The sources of support were school and district administration offices, external assistance agencies, and state departments of education. Support seemed to have four distinct functions. It reduced the demands which pre-implementation training and planning processes placed on teachers, primarily by enabling those activities to occur during school hours; provided teachers with much of the knowledge, skills, and other resources needed for planning; removed some of the barriers which would have made implementation difficult or impossible otherwise; and helped maintain teachers' morale and motivation at levels sufficiently high for continued participation in the projects.

PROCEDURES

The data reported here are from an intensive 1½ year study of educational change projects in five schools. The study was conducted by researchers from a regional educational laboratory, Research for Better Schools (RBS). Field research methods were used. Each member of a research team was responsible for one or two sites and spent approximately one day at each site each week. The researchers attended project meetings, interviewed participants and--to a lesser extent--other school staff, attended various meetings and other functions at the schools, and interacted informally with participants, linking agents, and others.

For the most part, data collection was relatively unstructured. However, two or three focused interviews were conducted with each participant. Also, a questionnaire was administered, demographic data were collected,

and some documents were examined, although those data sources were used minimally in the findings reported here. Field notes were recorded after each site visit; a computerized indexing system made the notes readily accessible to all members of the research team.

The study was iterative and hypothesis-generating; the research questions became more focused as time progressed. The researchers' observations and interpretations were discussed throughout the year, both informally and through meetings scheduled to discuss theoretical and methodological issues. Data were sometimes also discussed with linking agents and school administrators. The researchers read each other's field notes. Initial drafts of papers were submitted to other members of the research team for reactions; revised versions were submitted to RBS linking agents and other employees. Final versions were then written.

The five schools participated in projects developed collaboratively by the schools and RBS organizational units which were separate from the researchers' unit. Three elementary schools were involved in basic skills projects through which they worked with employees of one organizational unit of RBS; two secondary schools were involved in career education projects through which they worked with employees of another RBS unit.* The innovation approaches used in the two units differed from one another, but a committee of teachers and administrators at each school worked with a linking agent from RBS.

---

*Although the innovations will be described briefly here, this analysis is limited to the provision of support to participating teachers in five sites. For more information about the innovations, the reader should consult Career Preparation Component (1979), Graeber (1980), and Helms (1980).

The intent of the basic skills innovation was to help teachers use the results of educational research. Participants gathered classroom data, compared them to research data on the relationships between classroom variables and achievement test scores, and subsequently identified and implemented changes which would hopefully raise achievement test scores by manipulating classroom variables. The data collection procedures were rather elaborate; RBS employees developed extensive training materials and spent considerable time training teachers in the use of the procedures. During the first one and one-half years of the project, the time covered by this paper, two sets of classroom variables were examined--time on task and two content variables, prior learning and instructional overlap. Time on task is the time students actually spent working on the basic skills. Prior learning refers to the relationship between what students have mastered and what is needed to help them learn new content; instructional overlap is the overlap between content actually taught and content included on criterion instruments such as standardized or locally-constructed achievement tests. The materials used in the projects studied here were in a developmental phase; on the basis of experience with the project, the materials would be revised. RBS basis skills employees attempted to reduce the complexity of the materials before using them in subsequent sites. The extent to which revisions in materials will reduce or otherwise change the need for various kinds of innovation support is, of course, not known at this point.

The career education innovation was primarily a process through which a committee of teachers, administrators, and others worked with an

RBS linking agent to develop a program designed to meet the needs and preferences of that school and community. Basically, the committee in each school adopted a career education philosophy and goals, surveyed school faculty members and students to assess their preferences regarding career education goals and impressions of the extent to which the goals were being addressed, surveyed community members to assess their goal preferences, and developed plans for implementation. Teachers on the committee then conducted a nine-week field trial of implementation activities.

KINDS, SOURCES, AND FUNCTIONS OF SUPPORT

Support provided to innovation participants appeared to be critical to the successful accomplishment of such project activities as meetings to train teachers in the basic skills procedures or to plan career education programs, observations of classrooms to collect basic skills data, and the writing of classroom activities for career education. The amount of support which was given to participants varied by site. The provision of support was constrained by such things as resources available, other commitments of administrators, extent of administrative authority, administrator/community beliefs about remunerating teachers for planning classroom activities, perceived importance of the project, and relationships between administrators and teachers.

Although the provision of support to innovation participants has often been perceived as the responsibility of school administrators, other important sources of support are often available. In the projects described

here, much of the support was provided by school administrators, but linking agencies were also very critical sources of support. RBS linkers generally instigated the actions which kept the process moving at each school; they took primary responsibility for scheduling project activities and for moving from one stage of the process to the next. RBS linkers provided most of the knowledge, skills, and resource materials needed to plan and implement the innovations.* Linking agents from intermediate service agencies participated in two of the basic skills projects; one of those linkers provided substantial support for the innovation, primarily money for substitute teachers and assistance in the training of participants. As will be seen, linking agents were also important sources of other kinds of support. Other sources of support included school district central offices and state departments of education.

The support which was provided to participants in the projects described here served four basic functions: (a) process facilitation, (b) knowledge transfer, (c) barrier removal, and (d) morale maintenance. Each function will be discussed below. In addition, the kinds and sources of support which served each function will be described, as will the problems encountered in the provision or receipt of support. These are summarized in Figure 1.

---

*Corbett (1980) provides a more extensive discussion of the roles of linking agents.

Function	Kinds	Sources	Obstacles, Problems
Process facilitation	Released time or remuneration Arrangements for project activities Clerical assistance	Administrators Linking Agents State departments of education	Lack of funds Imposition on other teachers Absence from classroom Preparation for substitutes Lack of confidence in substitutes
Knowledge transfer	Training in procedures Introduction to content area Suggestions for decision alternatives or instructional strategies Resource materials	Linking agents Administrators Outside experts State departments of education	Time requirements Difficulty level
Barrier removal	Revision or suspension of policies or practices	Administrators	Lack of necessary authority Fear of setting precedent Other priorities
Morale preservation	Verbal encouragement Indications of project's importance and likely continuance Mediation between conflicting groups Reduction in demands of innovation Recognition via newsletters, conferences, etc. Support serving other functions	Linking agents Administrators	Lack of awareness of need or of symbolism in actions Tension between reducing demands and maintaining technical integrity Tension between providing guidance and dominating Existing factions

Figure 1. The functions of innovation support, the kinds and sources of support serving each function, and obstacles to the provision or receipt of support.

Process Facilitation

A major function of innovation support was to facilitate the processes of training/planning and implementation. This function was served by financial and logistical support which reduced the demands of participation--released time for teachers to attend planning meetings or prepare for implementation, logistical support for various project activities, and clerical assistance.

The major form of support in this category was the release of participants from classroom teaching assignments to attend project meetings during school hours. In two of the schools, substitute teachers were hired to release teachers for full-day or half-day meetings; money for this purpose was provided by the intermediate service agency in one site and by the district in the other site. In two other schools, classes were covered by non-participating teachers who either proctored participants' classes during free periods or taught participants' students in space adjacent to their own in an open space school; arrangements were made by personnel of school administrative offices. In the fifth site, project meetings were held after school and participants received academic credit (initially) or remuneration (later) for their time; money from a state department grant was used for that purpose.

The provision of released time or remuneration was important to teachers' continued participation. Both innovations required considerable time from participants, primarily for receiving training in the basic skills process and for planning career education programs. Teachers in every site at least occasionally considered the projects too demanding of

their time. If they had been required to donate their own time, it is likely that quite a few would have withdrawn from the projects.

Releasing participants from teaching duties was probably preferable to remuneration; at the site where participants were not released, project activities had to be severely reduced for several months when teachers became very concerned about demands on their time. However, the practice of releasing teachers itself became problematic at times, aside from the obvious financial problems. Project activities were intensified from time to time, requiring that teachers be released frequently. Participants became concerned about the amount of time they spent away from their classrooms. This concern was aggravated by skepticism about the quality of substitute teachers, insufficient advance notice to allow teachers to plan for substitutes, and a few complaints from parents. Non-participants sometimes resented having to relinquish planning time or to assume other responsibilities of participants. During times of intensified project activities, some participants commented that they would rather be paid to attend evening or weekend meetings than have to miss so many classes.

A second form of support which facilitated the innovation process involved making arrangements for project activities: scheduling meetings, reserving meeting rooms, notifying participants, providing refreshments, and so forth. This kind of support was generally provided by principals or their designees. Other forms of support in this category included developing meeting agendas and leading project meetings; these tasks were

generally shared by linkers and administrators. Support was sometimes provided in scheduling and conducting basic skills observations. Although support in this category may seem to be relatively insignificant, its absence disrupted the smooth flow of project activities. Meetings started late and with increased tension because teachers either had not received or had not read meeting notices or substitutes or proctors arrived late. Principals either did not or could not suspend other responsibilities and were summoned from meetings, leaving participants without needed guidance.

The third form of support which facilitated the innovation process was the provision of clerical assistance. Clerical support was especially provided to participants in the career education project. Numerous drafts of various planning documents were typed. Final versions were typed and printed. Survey forms were typed; results were tabulated. This support was provided by RBS. Clerical support facilitated the innovation process by reducing the demands on participants and allowing the process to proceed more rapidly.

Knowledge Transfer

A second major function of innovation support was to help participating teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, and resources needed for project planning and implementation. This kind of support was very important to the success of both innovations; knowledge transfer was fundamental to both. The basic skills innovation included, as a major component, technical processes which teachers probably could not have mastered without help; the career education innovation was in a content area in which most teachers

had little knowledge and few resources. Most knowledge transfer support was provided by RBS linkers although, as will be described, some support was provided by others.

As mentioned previously, extensive training in data collection and analysis procedures used in the basic skills project was required. In fact, most project meetings were devoted to training teachers in the procedures. The training primarily involved helping teachers understand the technical basis of the procedures and instructing teachers in the collection and analysis of data.

Knowledge transfer support to participants in the basic skills project also included various kinds of resources which were used for planning and implementation. The resources included materials containing instructions in the use of the basic skills procedures and forms for recording data; lists of strategies which might be used to increase time on task and curriculum overlap; research information about the effectiveness of various strategies; and a few teaching materials.

Knowledge transfer support was provided primarily by RBS. Employees in the basic skills unit developed the procedures, the training materials in using the procedures, and information on strategies for changing time on task and curriculum overlap. RBS linkers provided most of the training in the use of the procedures, though others frequently assisted. Other RBS basic skills employees sometimes attended project meetings and helped with the training. Other people, such as linkers from intermediate

service agencies, school and district administrators, and teachers on a pre-planning team, also assisted with the training. In one site the RBS linker routinely went through each stage of the process three times--once to train the intermediate service agency linker and school principal, once to train three teachers who were members of a local pre-planning team, and once to train the larger group of participants. After each group was trained, it assisted with the training of succeeding groups. RBS initially intended that a more substantial portion of the training would be conducted by others; however, some experienced difficulty mastering the technical materials sufficiently to serve as training leaders.

Knowledge transfer support to basic skills participants was limited primarily to training in the procedures and suggestions regarding various strategies which might be implemented. Teachers were given little guidance in the implementation of strategies, although most did not need such guidance. However, many teachers in one school decided to use behavior modification techniques without having much knowledge about how to use them; some people felt that the techniques had limited effectiveness because of teachers' lack of knowledge.

In the career education project, several kinds of knowledge were transferred to teachers. Background information about career education was given to participants throughout the period of project planning; most had had relatively little previous involvement with career education. Participants learned about career education as they discussed and made decisions

regarding such things as the philosophy, goals, and approaches which would be used in their programs. This information was provided by RBS linkers, who often presented it in the form of decision alternatives. For example, when career education goals were discussed, linkers distributed copies of goals which had been compiled from various sources. Participants at each site then selected goals, revising them as needed. Objectives and instructional approaches were selected similarly.

Many career education resources were shared with participants. Most of the resources were either descriptions of other career education programs or published instructional materials. The resources were especially useful when teachers planned classroom activities. RBS linkers took many resources to the sites. The linkers also made available human resources who brought additional material resources. The human resources were primarily other RBS career education employees and a state department of education employee who had access to many career education materials. Sometimes participants were simply made aware of resources by being shown them or told about them; sometimes the resources were given to participants or lent to them for extended periods of time. Another source of resource support was a funding grant from the state department of education. Among other things, the grant was used to purchase materials. Grant proposals were written by an RBS linker and school administrators.

Barrier Removal

A third function of innovation support was to remove or reduce obstacles to project planning and implementation. The kinds of support which served this function were administrative decisions which changed or temporarily suspended school or district policies or practices--for example, customs against paying teachers for planning classroom activities during after-school hours, especially hours which may have been scheduled by teachers individually; schedules which reduced the amount of time that might otherwise have been devoted to productive learning; and unofficial deterrents to student learning experiences with or in the community. The sources of this kind of support were school and district administrators. However, administrators either did not or could not always provide support which might have contributed to planning and implementation.

Barriers to innovation in both career education schools included procedural barriers to paying teachers for writing classroom activities. In one school, it was customary to give teachers additional pay for curriculum development only if it occurred during the summer. Curriculum development work done during the school year was considered part of normal contractual expectations. Administrators decided not to waive this custom for the career education project, thus refusing to provide barrier removal support. They did not want to set a precedent, particularly for something they considered as peripheral as career education. This occurred despite the availability of money from a state grant for this purpose and the threat that at least one teacher might withdraw

from the project if he/she were not paid for writing activities. In the other career education school, teachers could receive extra pay for curriculum development during the school year; however, it was expected that the group would work in the school at a scheduled time. The classroom activities were written individually; teachers preferred working at times and places convenient for them. Despite some initial resistance to setting aside this expectation, administrators eventually agreed to pay teachers for working individually.

An important barrier to achieving one of the goals of the basic skills innovation, increasing the amount of time during which students were productively engaged in basic skills instruction, was that schedules established outside individual classrooms impinged on instruction. For example, instructional time was often lost when students were removed from classrooms for supplemental or remedial instruction; this was especially problematic when students were removed from a particular classroom at many different times. The schedules for activities taught by specialists (e.g., library, art, music, and physical education) were sometimes seen as disruptive, especially when such activities were scheduled during young students' most alert morning hours and left the less productive afternoon hours for basic skills instruction. Administrators in the basic skills schools made some changes which were designed to improve these conditions. Such support was quite important to many

teachers. Some seemed to feel that they had done all they could to increase engaged time; further progress was dependent on scheduling changes which were beyond their authority.

There were several other kinds of support within this category which would have removed various barriers to planning and implementation; this support was not provided. RBS career education employees considered it important that communities be involved in career education; it was hoped that community members would participate in program planning and that the programs would include provisions which enabled students to work in the communities. However, community participation in program planning was minimal and both schools resisted program components which involved sending students out into the communities. Another kind of support which might have been provided was to relieve participants of expectations regarding the coverage of particular curriculum content. This kind of support might have reduced the pressures felt by participants, but was not even mentioned; perhaps it was seen as potentially provoking resistance to the project. A similar kind of support which one teacher sought was release from some extra-classroom duties so that more time would be available for planning; this was denied as precedent-setting.

The provision of barrier removal support was, of course, quite important to successful planning and implementation; without it, impediments to change remained. Yet, it was frequently delayed, denied, or rather grudgingly provided. As mentioned above, this kind of support was provided,

necessarily, by school and district administrators; only they had the authority to remove the kinds of obstacles to project planning and implementation which are of concern here. Sometimes it was relatively easy for administrators to make changes without seriously disrupting other parts of the system. At other times, changes needed by the project were not within the authority of the administrators involved in the project: the changes required superintendent or school board approval. Perhaps most frequently, other factors made it difficult for administrators to provide barrier removal support for the projects.

The other factors which limited barrier removal support generally involved administrative consideration of the innovations in relation to other responsibilities. The innovation, the participant group, or the unit involved in a particular action was generally small in comparison to the total domain of an administrator's authority. Administrators sometimes resisted changes which would have disrupted a large segment of the system. For example, scheduling changes generally were not made until the beginning of a new school year when they would be least disruptive. Administrators feared that some of the actions would set precedents which were incompatible with school or district philosophy. The administrators in one career education school were especially concerned about this. They might have been more willing to risk setting precedents had they considered career education a major element of the curriculum; however, they considered it peripheral.

The absence of sufficient barrier removal support is likely to become a more serious problem as time progresses. As the career education projects move from a field trial stage to implementation and especially as they are expanded to other classes and teachers, the conflict between implementing career education activities and covering regular curriculum content will become more serious. As additional variables, and in one site additional teachers, become involved in the basic skills project it may become more important that administrative changes are not delayed until the beginning of a new school year.

Morale Preservation

A fourth major function of innovation support was to intermittently restore participant morale. In some sites, this function was crucial to project continuance; teachers sometimes threatened to withdraw when project or other demands became too great or when too many tensions existed. The major kind of support which helped preserve morale was verbal encouragement. Process adjustments which helped reduce frustration and administrative presence at project meetings were other forms of moral support, as were linking agency newsletters describing individual projects and occasional conferences or meetings which brought participants from different sites together. The other three functions of innovation support--process facilitation, knowledge transfer, and barrier removal--were closely related to morale preservation. Innovation support which primarily served other functions tended to also help preserve morale;

the absence or inadequacy of other kinds of support tended to lower morale. Moral support was provided by administrators, RBS and intermediate service agency linkers, and by teachers to each other.

Several conditions made moral support necessary to teachers' continued willingness to participate in the project. Teachers received few rewards for their efforts. Both innovations required considerable time. The difficulty level of the basic skills training materials was sometimes too high for some teachers. Tensions existed between teachers and administrators in some sites; the tensions preceded the projects, but the projects brought people into closer contact with one another, increasing or accentuating the tensions.

Tensions between teachers and administrators varied across sites and over time; some tensions existed in nearly every site. It was, of course, impossible to completely shield projects from such tensions; projects included both teachers and administrators. From time to time tensions rose to such a level that the effective participation of some teachers, individually or in groups, was threatened. At such times, RBS linkers attempted to reduce the tensions, often by serving as mediators between teachers and administrators, or by adjusting the process* to reduce or change the nature of the interaction between teachers and administrators.

As mentioned previously, both innovations were sometimes quite demanding of teachers' time. This problem was sometimes heightened further

---

*For more information about process adjustments, see Donner (1980).

because time demands from other sources increased almost simultaneously. When this occurred, RBS linkers and school administrators usually attempted to reduce the time demands. For example, in two basic skills sites the number of classroom observations was cut drastically. In the third basic skills site project activities were severely reduced for several months. The career education linkers performed tasks which might otherwise have been performed by the participant group. The linkers submitted draft versions of materials or decision alternatives to participants.

The difficulty level of the basic skills materials sometimes seemed to lower teacher morale. Sometimes teachers had difficulty categorizing observed student behaviors, completing forms, or performing calculations. Several sources of moral support were available when teachers had problems with materials. RBS linkers and other employees tended to be quite helpful, explaining something a second or third time, providing clues or other guidance which would increase the likelihood of initial mastery of materials, or revising procedures to make them less difficult. School and district administrators, intermediate service agency linkers, and planning team members frequently offered assistance and encouragement.

Teachers sometimes became apprehensive about project continuance or expansion to others. Teachers seemed to consider the successful progression of the projects as quite dependent on the continued help of RBS linkers. It was not always clear that RBS linkers would be available

beyond the immediate future.* Teachers were not confident that administrators would support the projects sufficiently for them to continue after the linkers left. Understandably, teachers were hesitant to commit themselves to a program that might be discontinued after the end of the school year. Several teachers in the career education project initially thought that their participation in planning would later contribute to their academic departments when the project was expanded and other teachers used materials prepared by the planning team. However, when it became apparent that the project would not be expanded to all teachers in the foreseeable future--because administrators did not plan to mandate career education or write it into the curriculum and relatively few teachers were likely to adopt it otherwise--these participants felt that their efforts were rather futile. The activities would be used in their own classrooms but probably not in many others. Relatively little moral support was provided to assure teachers of project continuance, partly because there was little awareness of the need for such support and partly because linkers themselves were not always confident that the projects would continue beyond the predictable future.

The moral support which was provided when continued participation was threatened usually prevented withdrawal from the projects; however, such support often did not stimulate enthusiastic participation. Several factors contributed to this. Administrators and linkers were not always aware of

---

*Occassionally linkers told participants that their (the linker's) continued availability was doubtful; sometimes linkers said very little about future plans and participants inferred that the linker's assistance was of limited duration.

the need for moral support; teachers were often reluctant to express their insecurities and dissatisfactions. Sometimes actions which teachers might have interpreted as evidence of moral support were perceived by others as rather inconsequential. For example, administrators' absence from meetings was viewed as lack of support; administrators were sometimes so willing to let other things interfere that it appeared they considered their own presence rather unimportant.

Linkers experienced tension between providing enough guidance or process adjustment to ensure continued participation and maintaining the technical integrity of the materials or avoiding becoming so directive that participants' sense of project ownership would be seriously diminished. Administrators may have experienced a similar tension between obviously supporting the project and dominating it.

Pre-existing tensions between some teachers and administrators made it difficult for the administrators to provide support. So much tension existed in some sites that teachers were not very receptive to moral support from administrators. In some sites, teachers participated more freely when administrators were not in the meeting room. One participant group included an ever-changing number of administrators, the principal and staff of the central office and intermediate service agency, who sometimes out-numbered teachers. Sometimes linkers could not provide moral support to teachers without seeming to align themselves with teachers and against administrators, thus jeopardizing relationships with administrators.

SUMMARY AND FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

Many forms of innovation support were described here: financial, logistical, knowledge, authoritative, and moral. Each kind of support seemed very important to the successful development and implementation of the educational change projects studied here. The support served four distinct functions: (1) process facilitation, (2) knowledge transfer, (3) barrier removal, and (4) morale preservation.

The process facilitation function was served by the kinds of support which helped the innovation process flow more smoothly and with fewer demands on participants than otherwise. Financial assistance from state departments of education, intermediate service agencies, and district offices made it possible to hire substitute teachers so that participants could work on projects during school hours or to pay participants for working on projects at other times. Logistical support included arranging for other teachers to cover participants' classrooms so that they could attend project meetings, making arrangements for meetings, and scheduling various project activities. Clerical support reduced the demands on participants.

The knowledge transfer function helped teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to plan or implement the innovations. RBS linkers helped participants acquire knowledge and skills during planning or training sessions. Some trainees later helped provide knowledge support to others by assisting in subsequent training. Resources, or at least an

awareness of their existence, were provided by RBS or a state department employee or were purchased through state department grants.

The barrier removal function was served by administrative actions which eliminated or reduced obstacles to project planning and implementation by changing or temporarily suspending selected school or district policies or practices. Various kinds of organizational barriers have frequently been perceived as serious impediments to the successful achievement of educational change.

The morale preservation function helped encourage continued participation when demands or tensions became so high that withdrawal was threatened. Moral support was provided by administrators and by linking agents from RBS and intermediate service agencies.

Not only were there multiple sources of support. but the source of a particular kind of support sometimes varied among sites. For example, funds to pay substitutes or remunerate teachers came from the district office in one site, the intermediate service agency in another, and the state department of education in two others. Sometimes one source compensated for another. The role of one administrator was to conduct project meetings but he frequently left the meetings, usually to handle emergencies or attend other meetings; when this occurred, the linker conducted the meetings.

The need for many kinds of support was anticipated in advance and built into the projects by RBS. Provisions for knowledge transfer and process

facilitation support were made during initial planning stages. Administrators were asked to participate in projects; their willingness to support the project would then be apparent to teachers and administrators would be available to be informed of the need for support as it arose and make arrangements for it. Proposals were written to obtain state funds to purchase materials or remunerate teachers. The need for some kinds of support became apparent only as projects reached the point where the support was important. This frequently occurred with moral support. It was difficult or impossible to anticipate in advance that teachers would have difficulty mastering selected portions of the basic skills materials, that projects and outside forces would place many time demands or other pressures on participants, or that tensions in a school would accelerate and interfere with the project.

In addition to providing support themselves, RBS linkers sometimes played substantial roles in arranging for others to provide support. During initial negotiation and planning stages, RBS linkers strongly recommended that administrators actively participate in the projects and that teachers be released from teaching assignments to participate. RBS career education linkers helped apply for the grants from state departments of education and made arrangements for presentations about resources by a state department employee. In one site, teachers wanted their efforts to be acknowledged by administrators; the linker arranged this.

The extent to which the support which was provided performed the various functions varied. Financial and logistical support was generally

adequate to facilitate the planning and implementation processes. However, money was not available to pay substitutes and could not be used to fully remunerate teachers in one site; that project eventually had to be seriously curtailed. Also, tensions frequently arose in another site because arrangements for meetings and other project activities had not been adequate, and teachers in two other sites needed more than the allotted time to prepare project activities. Knowledge support was sufficient for most purposes but, in general, teachers could not have used all of the innovation procedures independently. The most problematic type of support was the exertion of authority to remove or reduce obstacles to project planning or implementation. The lack of barrier removal support has not seriously impeded project progress thus far but might become more problematic as projects are expanded. Moral support has generally been adequate for continued participation, but has not always stimulated enthusiastic participation.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Career Preparation Component. Technical proposal. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools, 1979.

Charters, W. W., and Pellegrin, R. Barriers to the innovation process: Four case studies of differentiated staffing. Administrative Science Quarterly, 1973, 9, 3-14.

Corbett, H. D. Degree of coupling and scope of change: School organization effects on implementation. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools, 1980.

Donner, W. W. Research into use: The social contexts of knowledge transfer. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools, 1980.

Fullan, M. The role of human agents internal to school districts in knowledge utilization. Prepared for Program on Research and Practice, National Institute for Studies in Education, and Far West Educational Laboratory, 1980.

Graeber, A. O. A basic skills instructional improvement program: Utilizing research to facilitate implementation and dissemination. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA, 1980.

Gross, N. Basic issues in the management of educational change efforts. In R. E. Herriott & N. Gross (Eds.), The dynamics of planned educational change: Case studies and analyses, pp. 20-46. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, 1979.

Gross, N., Giacquinta, J. B., and Bernstein, M. Implementing organizational innovations: A sociological analysis of planned educational change. New York: Basic Books, 1971.

Helms, D. C. A basic skills instructional improvement program: An overview. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA, 1980.

House, E. R. The politics of educational innovation. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, 1974.

Miles, M. B. Common properties of schools in context: The backdrop for knowledge utilization and "school improvement." Prepared for Program on Research and Educational Practice, National Institute of Education, 1980.

Sieber, S. A. Incentives and disincentives for knowledge utilization in public education--A synthesis of research. Study conducted for the Research and Educational Practices Program, National Institute of Education, 1979.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STUDY 1980 REPORTS

Degree of Coupling and Scope of Change: School Organization Effects on Implementation
H. Dickson Corbett, III

The Field Agent in School Improvement: Client Contributions to the Role
H. Dickson Corbett, III

Research into Use: The Social Contexts of Knowledge Transfer
William W. Donner

Support for Educational Change: Its Forms, Functions, and Sources
Judith A. Dawson

Teacher Participation in Educational Innovation: Some Insights into its Nature
Judith A. Dawson

For further information regarding these reports contact:

Ullik Rouk
RBS Public Information Office
Research for Better Schools, Inc.
444 North Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19123
(215) 574-9300